

“On the Existence of Blonds in Persia”

by Doctor Charles Piétrement

ANTHROPOLOGY SOCIETY OF PARIS
Meeting of June 15, 1879

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**People of Kermanshah in northern Persia.
Blonds are commonplace here.**

“On the Existence of Blonds in Persia”

At our March 20th meeting Marquis de Nadaillac was the only member of the Society who was able to provide positive information evidencing the presence today of blond persons in Persia, this information being based on the account of a Persian prince. At this time, messieurs, I would like to bring to your attention much more precise information which confirms what Marquis de Nadaillac shared with us previously. My friend, Monsieur Léon Rodet, a manufacturing engineer for the State, is in regular contact with the Persian physician Mirza Mohammed who, for more than two years, resided in Paris where he attended classes at the Faculty of Medicine. Mirza Mohammed understands and writes French well, but he does not speak it fluently. As for Monsieur Rodet, besides Sanskrit, Zend, and Pahlavi, he understands several of the modern dialects of India and Persia. I enter into these details in order to explain why Mirza Mohammed has not himself come before the Society to present his facts concerning blonds in Persia, and to point out that he is able to submit them very clearly to Monsieur Rodet. Here now is his information, as contained in excerpts from a letter that Monsieur Rodet wrote me May 3rd:

“I posed to Doctor Mirza Mohammed the question that was discussed the other day at the Anthropology Society. There definitely exists today in Persia individuals of the blond type, who are so commonplace throughout the land that, just like amongst ourselves, in the same family the two main color types—light and dark—often appear together. This is what has occurred, for example, in Mirza Mohammed’s family: of his four children, one—the second—is blond with reddish brown eyes and very light skin, whereas the three others possess, like their father and mother, dark hair and a swarthy complexion. They live in Kermanshah, a city that one passes through before reaching southern Persia. The young blond son owes his appearance to his maternal grandfather, who is blond with blue eyes.

“Mirza Mohammed estimates that an average of 2 out of 100 persons in the entire Persian population are blonds; this ratio decreases to 2 out of 1,000 in the southern province of Shiraz (ancient Susiana), and conversely increases as one goes north.

“According to ancient tradition which places, as you know, the *devs* (or, as we call them today by the Arabic word, *sheitans*) in the far north, all blonds are considered to be *sheitans*, that is to say, satans, demons, and goblins. Contrary

to what we find here in France, where blonds often possess a lymphatic temperament which renders them weak and indolent, in general the sheitans of Persia are lively and sharp, which helps justify the qualification that tradition has conferred on them.

“These then, my dear colleague¹, are the revealing facts which have been provided by a most competent person.”

Such are the records of Doctor Mirza Mohammed that came to me thanks to the intermediation of Monsieur Rodet. They seem to corroborate the two opinions that I expressed at the March 6th meeting, which were namely the following: firstly, the Avestan legend of Ormuzd vanquishing Ahriman and subjecting him to his will (*Yashts*, XV, 10-13, and XIX, 29) appears to me to be an allusion to a very ancient subjugation of a group of blond-haired people by dark-haired people; and secondly, I am disposed to regard the Aryan-like blonds seen today in Persia as descendants of a tribe of Germans, which Herodotus (I, 125) represents as having already come under the submission of the Persians before the era of Cyrus the Great.